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C O N F I D E N T I A L MAPUTO 000498

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MZ](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER BALOI ON ZIMBABWE AND VIOLENCE IN  
SOUTH AFRICA

REF: A. A. GABORONE 406

[1](#)B. B. MAPUTO 487

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Todd Chapman for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) In a May 23 meeting Foreign Minister Oldemiro Baloi told the Charge that the Mozambican Government (GRM) continues to monitor the situation in Zimbabwe closely through its Embassy and various Mozambican envoys sent to Zimbabwe. When pressed about the GRM's "silent diplomacy" and the need for more action, Baloi responded that it was important that Mozambique not criticize Mugabe openly lest the lines of communication with him be cut, "as we have already seen with Zambia and Tanzania." Mozambique's public posture, he argued, permitted the GRM to remain active behind the scenes.

[1](#)2. (C) Baloi reported that about two weeks prior SADC had sent a group of about 10 hand-picked former military officials from South Africa, Namibia, Angola, and Mozambique to Zimbabwe to speak with the Zimbabwean military and to observe the situation on the ground. (Note: This number is at variance with the 25 members of the group reported by SADC Executive Secretary Tomas Salomao, Ref A). This team, he said, confirmed for SADC governments the violence being perpetrated against MDC supporters. "The release of photos and the results of our own investigations make it ridiculous for anyone to deny what is happening in Zimbabwe," affirmed Baloi. The SADC team sought to convince the Zimbabwean military to not participate in violent acts but rather to concentrate on protecting the environment necessary for peaceful elections. Baloi said this team also briefed Mugabe, appealing for the violence to be stopped. The Foreign Minister described Mugabe as being very isolated right now and stated that most in his inner circle were afraid to tell the President what is actually transpiring throughout the country.

[1](#)3. (C) Once aides had left the room, Baloi acknowledged one-on-one that although Mbeki's efforts have not always been successful, the SADC- and Mbeki-led efforts were still the best option to ensure the fairest election results possible under the circumstances. Mbeki was in Maputo during the African Development Bank Annual Meeting May 14-15 for one day of "economic meetings." Baloi reported that, in fact, Mbeki and Guebuza spent three hours alone together discussing Zimbabwe, while the Foreign Minister exchanged information with South African aides. The Charge noted the importance for SADC election observers and suggested that 1,000 observers be made available as soon as possible. He responded that SADC was preparing its election observation plan, but did not think that such a high number was envisioned.

[1](#)4. (C) Transitioning to a discussion of the xenophobic attacks on Mozambican citizens in South Africa, Baloi clearly

understood the connection between this violence and the political crisis in Zimbabwe (Ref B), noting that Zimbabwe's problems were "spilling over the borders." The ramifications for the South Africa-Mozambique bilateral relationship were serious, he understood, but preventing an over-reaction by Mozambicans was of utmost concern. The Foreign Minister had spent much of the week on the issues related to transporting Mozambican nationals from South Africa back to Mozambique. (Note: President Guebuza has since publicly reaffirmed the long-standing friendship between the two countries, blaming the violence on thugs.)

15. (C) Comment: As a relatively new Foreign Minister with only two months in office, Baloi is still finding his way with the Guebuza Administration but is certainly engaged with his SADC counterparts and willing to engage with the USG. GRM officials are always quick to note privately that Mozambique is suffering greatly as a result of Zimbabwe's economic collapse and political instability, and therefore they remain active, they claim, behind the scenes to seek a solution. Other GRM Ministers in recent weeks have told the Charge privately that they wish for Mugabe's departure, but that "these things need to be handled delicately." A high-level USG meeting to discuss Zimbabwe with Guebuza and Baloi in Tanzania during the Sullivan Summit or in New York June 9-10 at the UN AIDS Conference is recommended.

Chapman